

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-01 SSO-00 EUR-12 NSC-05 NSCE-00

IO-13 /040 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W-GADIES:DFP

APPROVED BY AF/W-TWMSMITH

S/CPR-MSHEILS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 175654

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:OVIP, LI (TOLBERT, PRESIDENT WILLIAM R.)

SUBJECT:PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S STATE VISIT TO U.S.

REF: MONROVIA 4764

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR AT LARGE EMMETT HARMON CALLED ON AF/W DIRECTOR JULY 13 TO TAKE PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS REGARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TOLBERT'S VISIT TO US THIS FALL. WE TOLD HARMON MANY ARRANGEMENTS ARE CONTINGENT UPON TIMING OF VISIT, WHICH HARMON SAID COULD TAKE PLACE ANY-TIME AFTER SEPTEMBER 21. HARMON EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF TRIP, NOT ONLY FOR GOL, BUT ALSO AS DEMONSTRATION OF US SUPPORT FOR ITS FRIENDS IN AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR AT LARGE EMMETT HARMON CALLED ON AF/W DIRECTOR JULY 13 IN EFFORT TO FIND OUT WHAT PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE FOR PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S STATE VISIT. HARMON EMPHASIZED FOLLOWING FACTORS WHICH ADD TO IMPORTANCE OF VISIT: LIBERIA'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US, TOLBERT IS ONLY AFRICAN HEAD OF STATE TO BE INVITED TO US THIS YEAR, AND TOLBERT'S PERSONAL PRESTIGE WHICH
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HAS GIVEN GOL STRONG POSITION IN AFRICAN CIRCLES. HARMON

MENTIONED TOLBERT'S POSITION AS QUOTE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE THIRD WORLD UNQUOTE. (WE ASSUME HE MEANT LIBERIA'S

MEMBERSHIP ON THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NON-ALIGNED). IN ADDITION, HARMON NOTED THAT VISIT WOULD NOT ONLY PROVIDE GOL WITH VEHICLE TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR ITS VIEWS ON AFRICAN PROBLEMS, BUT WOULD GIVE US OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE ITS SUPPORT FOR ONE OF ITS STAUNCHEST FRIENDS IN AFRICA. IN THIS CONNECTION, HARMON REPORTED THAT TOLBERT HAD OFTEN BEEN ASKED BY FELLOW AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE WHY THEY SHOULD MODERATE THEIR RADICAL RHETORIC AND ATTITUDES SINCE LIBERIA HAD NOTHING IN PARTICULAR TO SHOW FOR ITS MODERATION.

2. HARMON SAID THAT FRG HAD GIVEN TOLBERT WARM AND FLATTERING RECEPTION DURING RECENT OFFICIAL VISIT THERE. GERMANS TOLD TOLBERT THEY LOOKED TO HIM AS A LEADER NOT ONLY WITHIN AFRICA, BUT AS A SPOKESMAN FOR AFRICA PARTICULARLY TO GERMANY, US AND JAPAN. HARMON SAID HE PERSONALLY HOPED THAT US WOULD BE ABLE TO EQUAL IF NOT SURPASS GERMAN HANDLING OF VISIT.

3. HARMON THEN MADE SOME CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS FOR VISIT. HE SAID TOLBERT WILLING TO TRAVEL ANYTIME AFTER SEPTEMBER 21. TOLBERT NOT INTERESTED IN LIMITING HIMSELF TO CEREMONIAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON, WHICH HE HAS ALREADY SEEN ON HIS TWO PRIVATE VISITS TO US, BUT ALSO HOPES TO TRAVEL IN US. TOLBERT HAS ALREADY ACCEPTED SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY, AND HOPES TO ADDRESS A SIMILARLY PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITY OUTSIDE WASHINGTON. HE MENTIONED UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS WAS POSSIBILITY. ALSO HAS RECEIVED INVITATION FROM GROUP OF NYC BUSINESSMEN FOR LUNCHEON. HARMON ASKED IF AN ADDRESS BEFORE JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE AS EVIDENCE OF IMPORTANCE US ATTACHES

TO VISIT, HE RECOGNIZED THAT CONGRESS MIGHT NOT BE IN SESSION ON DATES OF VISIT. WHEN ASKED IF TOLBERT WOULD ADDRESS UN DURING VISIT, HARMON REPLIED THAT UN VISIT COULD BE ARRANGED, DEPENDING ON DETAILS OF STATE VISIT. WE WERE NONCOMMITTAL REGARDING THESE PROPOSALS. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. HARMON SAID THAT TOTAL OF 26 PERSONS TRAVELED IN PRESIDENTIAL PARTY TO FRG, AND SIMILAR NUMBER WOULD COME TO US. PRINCIPALS IN DELEGATION TO US WOULD MOST PROBABLY INCLUDE: PRESIDENT TOLBERT, FOREIGN MINISTER, FINANCE MINISTER, ECONOMIC MINISTER, MINISTER OF INFORMATION, HARMON, AND NEW LIBERIAN AMBASSADOR TO US DENNIS. HARMON ALSO READ FROM CONFIDENTIAL GOL MEMO INSTRUCTING

INTERNAL MINISTERIAL-LEVEL COMMITTEE (UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF FORMIN DENNIS) TO MAP OUT STRATEGY FOR VISIT TO US.

HARMON INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE PLAYING MAJOR ROLE WITHIN THIS COMMITTEE.

5. IN PASSING, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT MRS. TOLBERT'S INTERESTS, HARMON SAID THAT SHE WOULD ENJOY VISITING HOMES FOR THE HANDICAPPED, HOSPITALS, AND ART MUSEUMS.

6. WE TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO NOTE THAT US WAS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT, BOTH BECAUSE CERTAIN ISSUES, PRINCIPALLY KOREA AND PUERTO RICO WERE LIKELY TO ARISE, AND BECAUSE IT WOULD BE A CURTAIN RAISER FOR THE UNGA. WE SAID WE WOULD FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS THERE CLOSELY. HARMON QUICKLY GRASPED THE POINT, AND REITERATED LIBERIA'S DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL.

7. HARMON WAS DUE TO FLY TO NYC LATE JULY 13 TO BID FAREWELL TO VICE-PRESIDENT GREENE DUE TO RETURN TO LIBERIA AFTER LONG HOSPITAL STAY IN US. HARMON WILL BE IN WASHINGTON UNTIL FRIDAY, JULY 16. AF/W DIRECTOR PROMISED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM AGAIN BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION REGARDING STATE VISIT. WILL REPORT ANY DEVELOPMENTS. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE175654
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: GADIES:DFF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760273-0921
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760753/aaaabuzo.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MONROVIA 4764
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <19 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RESIDENT TOLBERT'S STATE VISIT TO U.S.
TAGS: OVIP, LI, (TOLBERT, PRESIDENT WILLIAM R)
To: MONROVIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006